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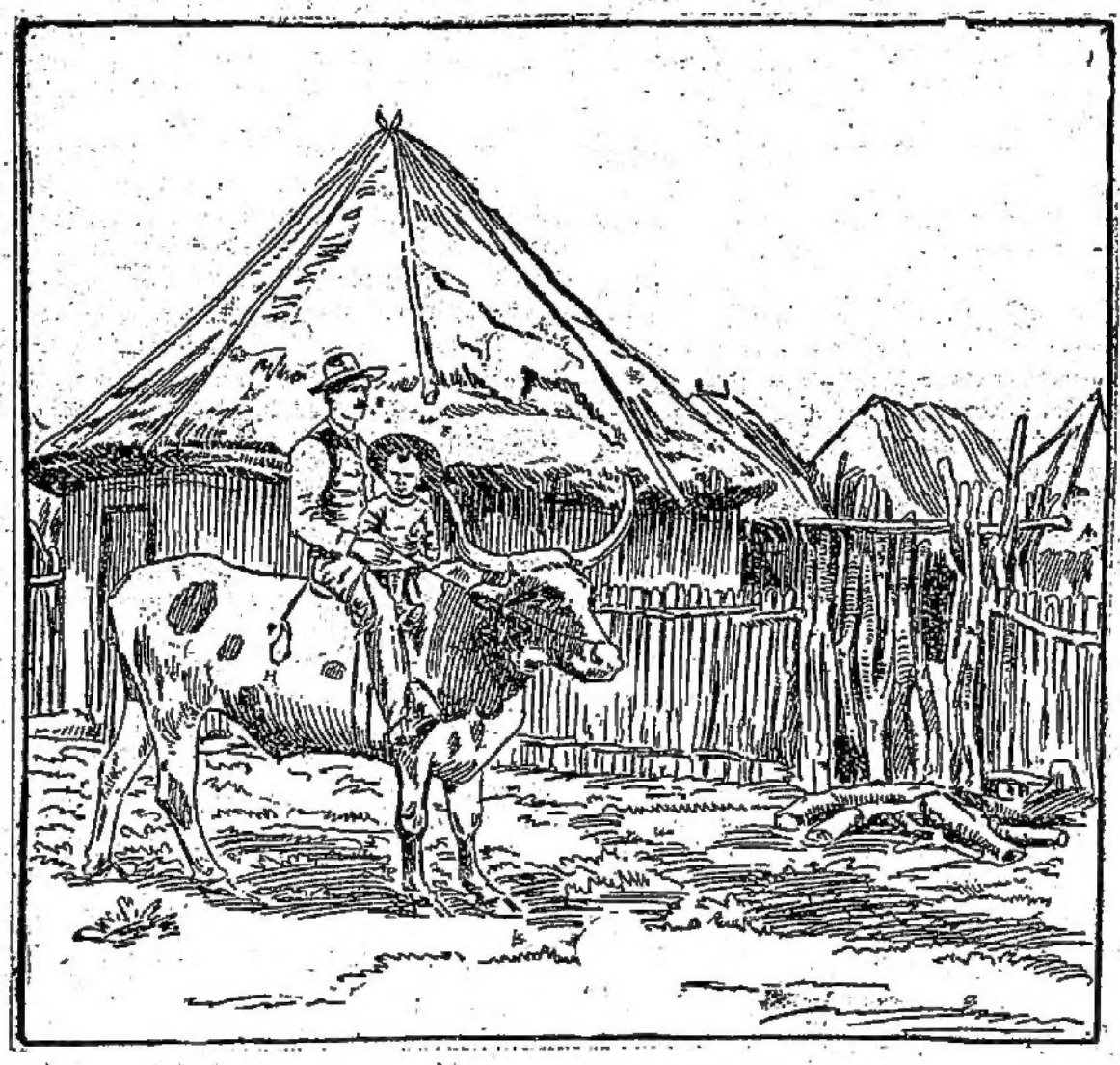
An African King's Funeral

(By the Rev. Frank W. Read.)

Among other thoughts that come to the African missionary when alone in the midst of heathenism, are these :—The utter hopelessness of the heathen condition ; the contrast between their debased and ignorant state and our happy and enlightened one ;—and the knowledge that there is no hope for them but in the gospel of the Blessed God, with the assurance that it will be the power unto salvation of all them who believe on the Son of God. After a perusal of the following brief account of an African native burial, with these thoughts in mind, one's personal attitude in regard to the whole question may be re-suggested, and the reader may be led to ask himself again, 'Am I doing my duty in regard to this matter,



A MISSION STATION, WEST AFRICA.

either in the way of giving, or praying, or going ?'

The capital ('ombala') of the Ondula country, two days north of the Sakanjimba Station of the American Board Mission, in South Angola, was recently the scene of the obsequies of a late chief, and the induction of a new one. The place is beautiful for situation, strategic also, evidently chosen at its foundation with a view to defence.

It is built upon a large round hill, covered with huge granite boulders, with others of a lesser size scattered all around its sides. At the summit is the chief's enclosure, the huts being built largely upon a foundation of soil carried up from the lower sides of the hill, and deposited upon the bare rock. Around this, in clear spaces below, are built the houses of his wives and immediate followers, all surrounded by a palisade having two gates, one on each side of the hill, opposite each other. Around this again, below, are built the compounds of the resident chiefs, who, with the ruler, form the governing body. Some of these have their permanent residence there ; but others reside temporarily, going to and from their respective districts over which they hold rule. Outside these compounds again are the remains of a mud and wattled fence that once ran around the hill and closed the whole in. Now, however, the glory of the palace has departed ; for, according to custom, since the old chief's death, who did not keep the place up, it has been left to go to ruin, to be rebuilt by the new chief.

Five days before such a funeral as this, the time of the women is given up to brewing the beer for the guests, during which time they are arriving from all parts of the country. These are accommodated, as far as possible, in the houses, huts being built for those who cannot be so provided for. On the fifth day, the proceedings proper take place ; but preparatory ceremonies, religious or otherwise, precede the burial. Morning and night, for several days, previous to interment, the crier, from an elevated point, shouts a warning to all to shut up their animals and take care of their children during the coming days until the funeral is over, lest they disappear. Plunder of this kind is permissible, and was much more carried on in older times than now. Three nights before the funeral, the widows of the dead chief began to wail for the dead, whose corpse has that day been removed from a hut near by, into the cooking house, the only sound building remaining in the compound. In the cold and darkness, they sit on the rocks and wail, and cry most mournfully for some hours. In the day-time, they sit in the house with the corpse. This continues during the second night, and the night before the funeral.

On the morning of the funeral, the whole place is like a hive of people. Chiefs with their clans have been gathering during the past five days, and late arrivals are still coming in. Up in the dead chief's compound, some of the young men are busy adorning the bier, which consists of a palm-pole with a frame fastened on, to which is suspended as much colored cloth as can be attached, reaching nearly to the ground. When the last artistic touches are made, this is taken into the house where the corpse is, and the corpse, being wrapped in an ox-skin just taken from one of the oxen killed in honor of the dead, as part of the religious ceremonies, is tied to the pole. The hoofs of the ox are left dangling, and appear below the curtains of the cloth, striking together as the bearers carry the corpse on their shoulders. To the native mind this is very pleasing, as a finishing touch suitable to an occasion so important. The widows sit crouched together all the morning, covered over with cloths. Later in the day, after the corpse has been carried out, these are conducted in single file, going in a crouching manner, with the cloths still over them, to a house in one of the lower outer compounds ; and later, they go to the river in the same way to undergo some rite of purification by bathing.

During the preparations referred to, a renowned fetish priest and some assistants are conducting religious ceremonies. Men, women, and children crowd about them, struggling to be sprinkled with water from a bark trough in which have been placed some herbs and other decoctions. The sprinkling is done with a bunch of twigs in one hand and a fowl in the other, both being dipped in the water and sprinkled over the body of each one presenting himself. The significance of this ceremony is, that good crops will be insured for the women during the reign of the incoming chief, and good hunting for the men.

Preparations for conducting the corpse out into the open country seem to be completed about midday ; but the rain which has been threatening begins to fall, whereupon some of the fetish doctors get together, and call upon all the parents of twins, with their children to congregate in one spot and sing a chorus as a charm, which they do with all their might. This is to cause the rain to cease, which it did within half an hour, a verification of its power over the elements. If it had not succeeded, however, some other evil-disposed persons or spirits with greater power would have destroyed the influence of their charm—all of which is good native logic.

The funeral procession now forms for descent into the adjacent country, where further ceremonies are to take place before burial. The corpse is carried by some of the old men, counsellors of the dead chief; others play musical instruments, and one assists the priests in strewing the pathway with a charm in the form of roots and leaves of a certain tree reduced to a pulp. The relatives and more important people of the Ombala follow behind in single file, the general crowd either following also, or

lining the sides of the pathway. Arrived at the outer gate, there is a halt, when a dog and fowl are killed, and their mingled blood spilled on the ground, to honor the egress of the dead chieftain into the country, and for other reasons. This ceremony over, the procession moves on, directing its way to a rough altar a few hundred yards from the gate. This altar is dedicated to the Spirit of the hunt, and is built of rough stones supported by spikes of wood driven into the ground, upon the points of which are placed skulls of animals killed in hunting. As the late chief was a hunter, worship is paid at this spot by singing and dancing, particularly on the part of hunters, the corpse being kept there while this is going on. During the advance to the altar, the different chiefs, with their clans grouped here and there about the slope, have been firing salutes (the honor done to the dead is measured by the quantity of powder expended); but the performance at the altar being over, the groups all converge towards the corpse, and surrounding it in an immense crowd of five thousand or more, musicians in the centre, they circle it continuously, chanting choruses, gesticulating, and leaping into the air as they move unceasingly round and round. Only those incapacitated through old age seem to refrain from this wild abandonment. Viewed from a rising ground, this is an impressive sight, seldom witnessed on so extensive a scale. The circling, swaying mass of black humanity, flecked with bright-colored cloths worn by the majority of them; the sea of heads being relieved by a variety of head-gear, from a handkerchief or a soft wide-awake to a silk hat or a policeman's helmet; the surface of the crowd continually broken by the men leaping with shouts into the air, in the ecstasy of the dance; the sonorous monotone of the chorus pointed by explosive shouts from the whole crowd; the mellow tone of the pipes and thud of the drums heard at intervals in the lull of the chanting: all this is a glimpse of heathen Africa not soon to be forgotten. This goes on for some two hours or more, when the incoming chief, who has been in seclusion in the Ombala, is sought for by some of the chief men, and escorted out to the crowd to be 'crowned'—to receive the insignia of office from the dead chief and his counsellors.

It is evidently a momentous ceremony for all directly concerned, as well as for the onlookers. The chief takes his stand facing the corpse, still carried on the shoulders of two men; half a dozen or more chief men stand in a line on one side of the corpse; the same number on the other; the crowd closing round, gazing in superstitious wonderment at the performance. The chief, after a short address to the people, depreciating their choice of himself for the office, and expressing his appreciation of the honor shown him, commences an interlocution with the corpse, the latter being supposed to have power to move the bearers, who carry it backwards or forwards at its will, thus answering the questions put to it, forward being 'Yes,' and backward, 'No.' The interrogations are on this wise: 'You, my father, our chief! I have been chosen chief by the people in your place. I am not worthy of that position. There are many older chiefs than I am. You know me who I am. I was one of your family when you were here upon the earth. Is there anything to prevent my acceptance of the rulership of this people? Have I done evil that discredits me? Is there anything I have done that may prevent me from being chief in your stead? Speak, I pray you, and let the people know if I am unworthy, or if you have any personal dislike for me.'

There is a pause; the silence is oppressive. The suppressed excitement is not only felt by all the people, from those surrounding the corpse who can see its movements, back to the outskirts of the vast crowd but the chief's strong, commanding voice quavers, and the eyes of the old men are rivetted on the bier in expectation of the answer. The two bearers, after standing motionless for some seconds, still amid perfect silence over the crowd, made tense by the suppressed breathing of the multitude, or the rustling of leaves stirred by the breeze in the trees near by, begin to sway slightly under their load; they incline a little to one side, then to the other; then move back a little; and finally and distinctly they lunge forward. The answer is propitious; the chest of the new chief heaves as he draws a deep breath. The old men breathe freely, and exchange wise nods of approval, and a murmur passes from the centre to the edges of the crowd.

The interrogation is continued in the same manner, and answered in the same way, until it is fully ascertained that the choice of the people entirely meets the wishes of the dead chief. Then the 'Master of the keys' of the old chief comes forward amid a murmur of applause from the populace, and hangs a bunch of keys that belonged to the dead chief around the neck of the new one—this being the insignia of his formal introduction to office.

The tall commanding chief, with much dignity and grace, but still under great excitement, now addresses the corpse again, covenanting to rekindle new fires in the Ombala, when the fires of the dead chief shall be put out, and to keep them going all his lifetime; to build up the place and restore it to its former glory, as a good chief should; to be a wise judge and a father to the people, calling on the dead and the living to be witnesses to his covenant.

Amidst murmurs of applause, the crowd breaks up, and two processions are formed; one to escort the corpse to its last resting-place with the remains of the former chiefs, and the other, headed by fifers and drummers, to conduct the new chief to his compound.

As one wended his way through the crowd in the evening twilight, back to the humble lodging that hospitality had provided for the white stranger, thoughts upon scenes just witnessed crowded one another. Among them this: Take away the servile superstition and fear from all those ceremonies, and there remains a substratum of native dignity, loyalty, and respect that the gospel will one day transfigure, enhance and glorify. Had the chief consulted the will of the people alone instead of the corpse; had he, with his dignified bearing and address, called upon the true God to witness his fidelity; had he covenanted with him and the people to be a good and true chief, it had been a most imposing ceremony.

It was the mission of the church in the early Christian centuries to lift our forefathers in Britain from similar heathen habits and customs into the dignity of a Christian people, capable of producing in the times then to come an Alfred, a Cromwell, a Gladstone, a Florence Nightingale, and a Queen Victoria. With the same power, it is the mission of the church of to-day to be the same instrument, and carry on the same transformation already begun in this dark land. It is the privilege of every Christian to have a share in it.

Sakanjimba, West Central Africa.

The Overcoming Life.

I knew a lady who was a Christian, but a very uncomfortable and unhappy Christian, and who made everybody unhappy around her, and had the special peculiarity that, while she kept good enough in her own room, when she went out to the family all the prickles came out, and she was exceedingly disagreeable. She knew it was wrong, but she did not know what to do, and thought she would lose her reason.

One day she had been as cross as she could be all day, and in the evening she met a gentleman friend, who said to her: 'If you will only take the sixth chapter of Romans, and kneel down with the open book on the chair before you, and read it verse by verse, and ask the Lord to show you what it means; and if you understand it and believe it, you will get deliverance.'

She promised to do so, and when reading in her own chamber that night she came to the eleventh verse: 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin!' and she could not understand that. 'I am not dead,' said she; 'it would be telling a falsehood if I said that. When I go out of my room I know that I shall do just the same as I have been doing all day.' But the blessed Spirit would not let her rest, and at last she made up her mind to obey this command, and to 'reckon' herself, on that authority, 'dead to sin.'

She turned to Gal ii., 20, where Paul says: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' She repeated it over and over, and although she could not understand it, she claimed it by faith continually, and asked the Lord continually to enable her to understand it. She went to sleep doing it, she got up in the morning doing it, she did it as she went down stairs. 'But how will it be,' she thought, 'when I get into the dining-room?' But she went into the dining-room saying it, and went through her breakfast saying it, and the Lord made it true—she was dead to her old temptation.

After breakfast was over her mother said to her: 'What is the matter with you; has anything happened? You seem to be so happy.' She replied that it seemed as if her soul had sailed out into heaven. Since then, for three years, she has been living the over-coming life, reckoning herself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ; and not for a moment has the old temptation troubled her. Any Christian can do that, no matter what his present condition may be. At the very moment when he is in the worst possible condition he stands most in need of it, and God's Spirit stands ready to help.—'American Paper.'

The Find-the-Place Almanac

TEXTS IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

April 28, Sun.—Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

April 29, Mon.—Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.

April 30, Tues.—As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

May 1, Wed.—God is witness.

May 2, Thur.—Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

May 3, Fri.—Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

May 4, Sat.—Walk honestly toward them that are without.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Claudia's Place

(By A. R. Buckland, in 'Sunday at Home.')

'What I feel,' said Claudia Haberton, sitting up with a movement of indignation, 'is the miserable lack of purpose in one's life.'

'Nothing to do?' said Mary Windsor.

'To do! Yes, of a kind; common, insignificant work, about which it is impossible to feel any enthusiasm.'

'"The trivial round"?'

'Trivial enough. A thousand could do it as well or better than I can. I want more—to feel that I am in my place and doing the very thing for which I am fitted.'

'Sure your liver is all right?'

'There you go, just like the others. One can't express a wish to be of more use in the world without people muttering about discontent, and telling you you are out of sorts.'

'Well, I had better go before I say worse'; and Mary went.

Perhaps it was as well; for Claudia's aspirations were so often expressed in terms like these that she began to bore her friends. One, in a moment of exasperation, had advised her to go out as a nursery governess. 'You would,' she said, 'have a wonderful opportunity of showing what is in you, and if you really succeed, you might make at least one mother happy.' But Claudia put the idea aside with scorn. Another said that it all came of being surrounded with comfort, and that if Claudia had been poorer, she would have been troubled with no such yearnings; the actual anxieties of life would have filled the vacuum. That, too, brought a cloud over their friendship. And the problem remained unsolved.

Mr. Haberton, immersed in affairs, had little time to consider his daughter's whims. Mrs. Haberton, long an invalid, was too much occupied in battling with her own ailments, and bearing the pain which was her daily lot, to feel acute sympathy with Claudia's woes.

'My dear,' she said one day, when her daughter had been more than usually eloquent upon the want of purpose in her life, 'why don't you think of some occupation?'

'But what occupation?' said Claudia, 'Here I am at home, with everything around me, and no wants to supply——'

'That is something,' put in Mrs. Haberton.

'Oh, yes, people always tell you that; but after all, wouldn't it be better to have a life to face, and to——'

'Poor dear!' said Mrs. Haberton, stroking her daughter's cheek with a thin hand.

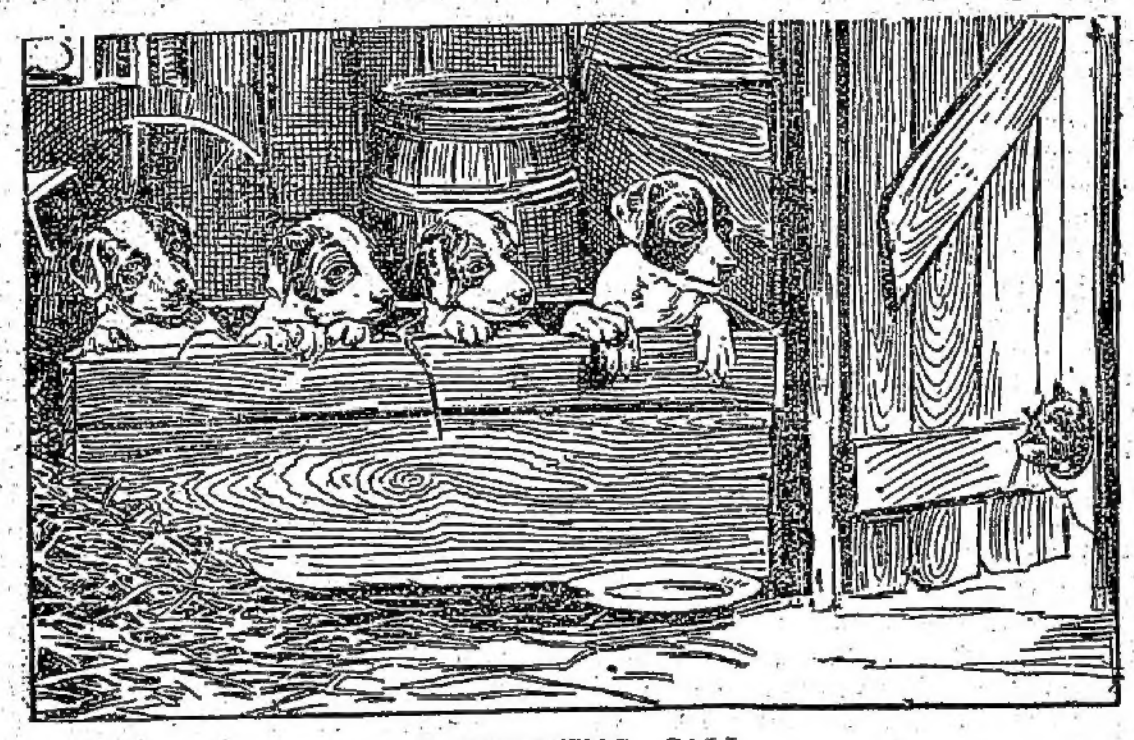
'Please don't, mamma,' said Claudia; 'you know how I dislike to be petted like a child.

'My dear,' said Mrs. Haberton, 'I feel my pain again; do give me my medicine.'

She had asked for it a quarter of an hour before, but Claudia had forgotten so trivial a matter in the statement of her own woes. Now she looked keenly at her mother to see if this request was but an attempt to create a diversion. But the drawn look was sufficient. She hastily measured out the medicine, and as hastily left the room, saying, 'I will send Pinsett to you at once.'

Pinsett was Mrs. Haberton's maid, who was speedily upon the spot to deal with the invalid.

But Claudia had withdrawn to her own room where she was soon deep in a pamphlet upon the social position of Woman, her true Rights in the world, and the noble opportunities for serving Mankind outside the home



A MORNING CALL.

—'Our Dumb Animals.'

'Ah,' said Claudia to herself, if I could only find some occupation which would give a purpose to existence—something which would make me really useful!'

After all, was there any reason why she should not? There was Eroica Baldwin who had become a hospital nurse, and wore the neatest possible costume with quite inimitable grace. It might be worth while asking her a few questions. It was true she had never much cared for Eroica; she was so tall and strong, so absurdly healthy, and so intolerant of one's aspirations. Still her experience might be of use.

There was Babette Irving — a foolish name, but it was her parents' fault; they had apparently thought she would always remain an infant in arms. Her father had married again, and Babette was keeping house with another woman of talent. Babette wrote stories for children and for the 'young person,' conducting a 'children's column' in a weekly paper, supplied 'answers to correspondents' upon a startling variety of absurd questions, and contrived to live thereby. Babette's friend had been reared in the lap of luxury until a woeful year in the City made her father a bankrupt, and sent her to earn a living as a teacher of singing. They ought to have some advice to give.

Then there was Sarah Griffin—'plain Sarah,' as some of the unkind had chosen to call her at school. She was one of nine girls, and when her father died suddenly, and was found to have made but poor provision for his family, she had been thankful to find a place in a shop where an association of ladies endeavored to get a sale for the work of 'distressed gentlewomen.'

She also ought to know something of the world. Perhaps she, too, could offer some suggestion as to how the life of a poor aimless thing like Claudia Haberton might be animated by a purpose.

But they all lived in London, the very place, as Claudia felt, where women of spirit and of 'views' should be. If she could but have a few hours' chat with each! And, after all, no doubt, this could be arranged. It was but a little time since Aunt Jane and Aunt Ruth had asked when she was going to cheer them with another visit. Might not their invitation give her just the opportunity she sought?

Claudia reflected. She had not in the past cared much for her aunts' household. The elderly maiden ladies were 'the dearest creatures,' she told herself; but they were not interesting. Aunt Jane was always engaged in knitting with red wool, any fragments of attention which could be given from that work being devoted to Molossus, the toy terrier who almost dwelt in her lap. Aunt Ruth was equally devoted in the matter of embroidery, and in the watchful eye she kept on Scipio, a Persian cat of lofty lineage and austere mien.

Their other interests were few, and were mainly centred upon their pensioners among the poor. Their friends were of their own generation. Thus in the past Claudia had not felt any eager yearning for the house in St. John's Wood, where the sisters dwelt at peace. But it was otherwise now, because Claudia had new designs upon London.

She confided to her mother her readiness to accept the recent invitation.

'Go, my dear, by all means,' said the invalid; 'I am sure you must want a change, especially after so many weeks of looking after me.'

'Pinsett,' said Claudia, salving her own conscience, 'is so very careful and efficient.'

'And so good,' added Mrs. Haberton, 'you may be sure that I shall be safe in her hands.'

For the moment Claudia was sensible of a little pang. Ought she to be so readily dispensed with? Were her services a quantity which could be neglected?

But, after all, this was nothing. She did not neglect her mother; that was out of the question.

So it was agreed that Claudia should go. Aunt Jane wrote a letter expressing her joy at the prospect, and Aunt Ruth added a postscript which was as long as the letter, confirming all that her sister had said.

So Claudia went up to town, and was received with open arms by her aunts.

The placid household at St. John's Wood was all the brighter for Claudia's presence; but she could not suffer herself to remain for more than a day or two in the light of an ordinary visitor.

'I came this time, you know,' she early explained to Aunt Jane, 'on a voyage of exploration.'

'Of what, my dear?' said Aunt Jane, to whom great London was still a fearsome place, full of grievous peril.

'Of exploration, you know. I am going to look up a few old friends, and see how they live. They are working women, who——'

'But,' said Aunt Jane, 'do you think you ought to go amongst the poor alone?'

'Oh, they aren't poor in that sense, auntie; they are just single women, old acquaintances of mine—school-fellows, indeed—who have to work for their living. I want to see them again, and find out how they get on, whether they have found their place in life, and are happy.'

Aunt Jane was not wholly satisfied; but Claudia was not in her teens, nor was she a stranger in London. So the scheme was passed, and all the more readily because Claudia explained that she did not mean to make her calls at random.

Her first voyage was to the flat in which Babette Irving and her friend lived. It was in Bloomsbury, and not in a pile of new buildings. In old-fashioned phraseology, Miss Irving and her friend would have been said to have taken 'unfurnished apartments,' into which they had moved their own possessions. It was a dull house in a dull side-street. Babette said that Lord Macaulay in his younger days was a familiar figure in their region, since Zachary Macaulay had lived in a house near by. That was interesting, but did not compensate for the dinginess of the surroundings.

Babette herself looked older.

'Worry, my dear, worry,' was the only explanation of the fact that she offered. It seemed ample.

Her room was not decked out with all the prettiness Claudia, with the remembrance of other days, had looked for. Babette seemed to make the floor her waste-paper basket; and there was a shocking contempt for appearances in the way in which books and papers littered the chairs and tables. Nor did Babette talk with enthusiasm of her work.

'Enjoy it?' she said, in answer to a question, 'I sometimes wish I might never see pen, ink, and paper again. That is when I am over-done. But I am ashamed to say it; for I magnify my office as a working woman, and am thankful to be independent.'

'But I thought literary people had such a pleasure in their gift,' said Claudia.

'Very likely—those eminent persons who tell their interviewers they never write more than five hundred words a day. But I am only a hewer of wood and drawer of water so to speak.'

'But the thought of being useful!'

'Yes, and the thought—— But here is Susie.'

Susie was the friend who taught singing. Claudia thought she had never seen a woman look more exhausted; but Claudia knew so little of life.

'You have had a long day, my dear,' said Babette, as Susie threw herself into a chair; 'it is your journey to the poles, isn't it?'

'To the poles?' said Claudia.

'Yes, this is the day she has to be at Hampstead school from 9.30 till 12.30 and at a Balham school from 2.30 till 4. Its rather a drive to do it, since they are as far as the poles asunder.

'Still,' said Claudia, 'railway travelling must rest you.'

'Not very much,' said Susie, 'when you travel third-class and the trains are crowded.'

'But it must be so nice to feel that you are filling a really useful position in the world.'

'I don't know that I am,' said Susie, rather wearily. 'A good many of my pupils have no ear, and had far better be employed at something else.'

'But your art.'

'I am afraid few of them think much of that, and what I have to do is to see that the parents are well enough pleased to keep their girls on at singing. I do my best for them; but one gets tired.'

Claudia did not reply. This seemed a sadly mercenary view of work, and a little shocked her. But then Claudia had not to earn her own living.

Claudia's inquiries of Sarah Griffin were scarcely more cheerful. Sarah was at the shop from 8.30 a.m. until seven, and was unable, therefore, to see her friend during the day. Aunt Jane and Aunt Ruth insisted that Sarah should spend the evening at St. John's Wood, and promised that she should get away in good time in the morning.

She came. Again Claudia marvelled at the change in her friend. Already she seemed ten years older than her age; her clothes, if neat, cried aloud of a narrow purse. She had lost a good deal of the brightness which once marked her, and had gathered instead a patient, worn look which had a pathos of its own.

Sarah did not announce her poverty, but under the sympathetic hands of Aunt Jane she in time poured out the history of her daily life.

She was thankful to be in work, even though it was poorly paid. When first in search of occupation she had spent three weary weeks, in going from one house of business to another. In some she was treated courteously, in a few kindly, in many coarsely, in some insultingly. But that was nothing; Sarah knew of girls far more tenderly reared than she had been, whose experiences had been even sadder.

But Claudia hoped that now Sarah was really at work she was comfortable.

Sarah smiled a little wintry smile. Yes; she was comfortable, and very thankful to be at work.

Aunt Jane with many apologies wanted more detail.

Then it appeared that Sarah was living on twelve shillings and sixpence a week. She lived at a home for young women in business; she fed chiefly on bread and butter. Her clothes depended upon occasional gifts from friends.

Claudia began to condemn the world for its hardness.

'But I'm not clever,' said Sarah; 'I can do nothing in particular, and there are so many of us wanting work.'

'Many?' said Claudia, with some surprise. 'I thought most girls brought up as you and I were rarely thought of work, except, of course, at home.'

'Yes, my dear,' said Sarah; 'but when one goes out into the world, one finds things rather different. If you were to advertise a place in an office which any intelligent young woman could fill, you would have hundreds of applications, even if you offered them no more than a shilling a day.'

'And do all these people really need it?'

'Yes; and we all think it hard when girls come and, for the mere pleasure of doing something, take such work at a lower wage than those can take who must live.'

'But look at me,' said Claudia; 'I don't want the money, but I want occupation; I want to feel that I have some definite duties, and some place of my own in the world.'

Sarah looked a little puzzled. Then she said, 'Perhaps Mrs. Warwick could help you.'

'Who is Mrs. Warwick?'

'Mrs. Warwick is the presiding genius of a ladies' club to which some of my friends go. I dare say one of them will be very glad to take us there in the evening, if you can come.'

So they agreed to go. Claudia felt, it must be owned, a little disappointed at what she had heard from her friends, but was still inclined to believe that between the old life at home and the drudgery for the bare means of existence there still lay many things which she could do. She revolved the subject in the course of a morning walk on the day they were to visit the club, and returned to the shelter of her aunt's home with something of her old confidence restored.

Despite their goodness—Claudia could not question that—how poor, she thought, looked their simple ways! Aunt Jane sat, as aforetime, at one side of the fireplace, Aunt Ruth at the other. Aunt Jane was knitting in the red wool, as she had always knitted since Claudia had known her. Aunt Ruth, with an equal devotion to habit, was working her way through a piece of embroidery. Molossus, the toy terrier, was asleep in Aunt Jane's lap; Scipio reposed luxuriously at Aunt Ruth's feet.

It was a peaceful scene; yet it had its mild excitements. The two aunts began at once to explain.

'We are so glad you are come in,' said Aunt Jane.

'Because old Rooker has been,' said Aunt Ruth.

'And with such good news! He has heard from his boy——'

'His boy, you know, who ran away,' continued Aunt Ruth.

'He is coming home in a month or two, just to see his father, and is then going back again—'

"Back again to America, you know——'

'Where he is doing well——'

'And he sends his father five pounds——'

'And now the old man says he will not need our half-crown a week any longer——'

'So we can give it to old Mrs. Wimple, his neighbor——'

'A great sufferer, you know, and, oh, so patient with it all!'

'Really,' said Claudia, a little confused by this antiphonal kind of a narrative.

'Yes,' continued Aunt Jane, 'and I see a letter has come in for you — from home, I think. So it has been quite an eventful morning.'

Claudia took the letter and went up to her own room, reflecting a little ungratefully upon the contentment which reigned below.

She opened her letter. It was, she saw, from her mother, written, apparently, at two or three sittings, for the last sheet contained a most voluminous postscript. She read the opening page of salutation, and then laid it down to prepare for luncheon. Musing as she went about her room, time slipped away, and the gong was rumbling out its call before she was quite ready to go down. She hurried away, and the letter was left unfinished. It caught her eye again in the afternoon; but again Claudia was hurried, and resolved that it could very well wait until she returned at night.

The club was amusing. Mrs. Warwick, its leading spirit, pleasantly mingled a certain motherly sympathy with an unconventional habit of manner and speech. There was an address or lecture during the evening by a middle-aged woman of great fluency, who rather astounded Claudia by the freest possible assumption, and by the most sweeping criticism of the established order of things as it affected women. The general conversation of the members seemed, however, no less frivolous, though much less restrained, than she had heard in drawing-rooms at home. There was a sensation of freedom in the place, which Claudia felt to be new; but she could not at the time determine whether it did or did not commend itself to her sense of right.

She parted from Sarah Griffin at the door of the club and drove to St. John's Wood in a hansom. The repose of the house had not been disturbed in her absence. Aunt Jane, Aunt Ruth, Molossus and Scipio were all in their accustomed places.

'And here is another letter for you, my dear,' said Aunt Jane. 'I hope your earlier letter brought good news of all?'

Claudia blushed a healthy, honest, old-fashioned flush. She had forgotten that letter. Its opening page or so had alone been glanced at.

Aunt Jane looked astonished at the confession, but with her placid good-nature added, 'Of course, my dear, it was the little excitement of this evening.'

'So natural to young heads,' added Aunt Ruth with a shake of her curls.

But Claudia was ashamed of herself, and ran upstairs for the first letter.

A hasty glance showed her that, whilst it began in ordinary gossip, the long postscript dealt with a more serious subject. Mr. Haberton was ill; he had driven home late at night from a distance, and had taken a chill. Mrs. Haberton hoped it would pass off; Claudia was not to feel alarmed; Pinsett had again proved herself invaluable, and between them they could nurse the patient comfortably.

Claudia hastened to the second letter. Her fears were justified. Her father was worse; pneumonia had set in; the doctor was anxious; they were trying to secure a trained nurse; perhaps Claudia would like to return as soon as she got the letter. 'When did this come?' enquired Claudia eagerly.

'A very few moments after you left,' said Aunt Jane. 'Of course, if you had been here, you might just have caught the eight o'clock train—very late for you to go by, but with your father so ill——' And Aunt Jane wiped a tear away.

Claudia also wept.

'Can nothing be done to-night?' she presently cried. 'Must I wait till to-morrow? He may be——' But she did not like to finish the sentence.

Aunt Ruth had risen to the occasion; she was already adjusting her spectacles with trembling hands in order to explore the A.B.C. time-table. A very brief examination of the book showed that Claudia could not get home that night. They could only wait until morning.

Claudia spent a sleepless night. She had come to London to find a mission in life. The first great sorrow had fallen upon her home during her absence, and by inexcusable preoccupation she had perhaps made it impossible to reach home before her father's death. She knew that pneumonia often claimed its victims swiftly; she might reach home too late. Her father had been good to her in his own rather stern way. He was not a small, weak, or peevish character. To have helped him in sickness would have been a pleasant duty even to Claudia, who had contrived to overlook her mother's frail health. And others were serving him—that weak mother; Pinsett, too, and perhaps a hired nurse. It was unbearable.

'My dear,' said Aunt Jane, as Claudia wept aloud, 'we are in our Heavenly Father's hands; let us ask him to keep your dear father at least until you see him.'

So those two old maids with difficulty adjusted their stiff knees to kneeling, and, as Aunt Jane lifted her quavering voice in a few sentences of simple prayer, she laid a trembling hand protectingly on Claudia.

Would that night never go? Its hours to Claudia seemed weeks. The shock of an impending loss would of itself have been hard enough to bear; but to remember that by her own indifference to home she had perhaps missed seeing her father again alive—that was worse than all.

And then, as she thought of the sick room, she remembered her mother. How had she contrived for years not to see that in the daily care of that patient woman there lay the first call for a dutiful daughter? It was noble to work; and there was a work for everyone to do. But why had she foolishly gone afield to look for occupation and a place in life, when an obvious duty and a post she alone could best fill lay at home? If God would only give her time to amend!

It was a limp, tear-stained and humble Claudia who reached home by the first train the next morning. Her father was alive—that was granted to her. Her mother had borne up bravely, but the struggle was obvious. A nurse was in possession of the sick chamber and Claudia could only look on where often she fain would have been the chief worker. But the room for amendment was provided. Mr. Haberton recovered very slowly, and was warned always to use the utmost care. Mrs. Haberton, when the worst of her husband's illness was over, showed signs of collapse herself. Claudia gave herself up to a new ministry. Her mother no longer called for Pinsett; Mr. Haberton found an admirable successor to his trained nurse. Claudia had found her place, and in gratitude to God resolved to give the fullest obedience to the ancient precept: 'If any have children . . . . let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents.'

Little Song Sparrow.

True to his instinct, Little Song Sparrow came back to his northern home before the snow banks were gone. He had been telling us for several days that spring had come, when the north wind began to blow, and the snow came down in a manner that would have done credit to January. Little Song Sparrow found a berth for the night in the depths of a spruce tree, where he curled up like a ball and slept snug and warm. During the night the snow changed to sleet, and then to rain, which froze and crystallized everything. When he came out of his evergreen bedroom early the next morning, the clouds were all gone, and he found a windy, glittering world, with scarcely a place for the sole of his foot. At last he found a perch on the tip-top of the farmer's great woodpile, and began to sing.

Little Song Sparrow never dragged in his music, and there were no doleful sounds. From the tuneful beginning, quickly through the merry middle to the final note, it was a song of happiness and trust. The farmer heard it as he went to the barn with his milk pails, and said to himself, 'A pretty nice morning, after all, and not so cold as I thought it was.'

Song Sparrow finished his first concert just as the sun rose, and having given thanks, he went to look for some breakfast; but not a bare twig could he find where he could get one juicy little bud. Ice covered everything, so he went back to the highest stick of the woodpile for another song service. The wind carried the song to a man going to his work. He was walking with downcast head and heavy heart, as he thought of his sick child at home, and his slender purse and empty coal bin. Then he heard the sparrow's song, so brave and joyous on that wintry morning. He raised his head and quickened his steps as he remembered, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows.' 'Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.'

The sparrow finished his second song service and took another look for breakfast, but the wind was still too cold for the ice to melt, and he had no better success than before. With a few cheerful little chirps and nods and flourishes, he returned again to the woodpile and fairly outdid himself in rapturous song.

The minister had retired the night before with a heavy heart. The church finances and the choir dilemma were bad enough, but besides these, an old church quarrel had broken out again. He had passed a weary night and awoke with a headache. He was just thinking of the gloomy situation and listening to the wind that seemed so dismal, when that same wind brought to him the sparrow's song of trust and thanksgiving.

He listened and listened until the song got into his soul, and he repeated aloud, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.'

He had been wondering how he could get the victory of his worries and discouragements; now he could say, 'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Over against financial straitness, he put, 'My God shall supply all your need,' and against the other troubles he put the sure promise of God: 'He bringeth them out of their distresses, he maketh the storm a calm.' 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' The minister's wife knew of her husband's depression and dreaded that day. She was trying to think of something cheerful to say to him at the breakfast table, when he burst into the room singing, 'There's sunshine in my soul to-day,' and his face was so bright that she knew it came from the heart.

In the meantime, the sun was beginning to melt the ice from the trees and the little sparrow, having finished his 'Te Deum,' went to his breakfast and found it just to his liking.

I was going to say that the minister preached a sermon with the song sparrow for a text, but he did a great deal more than that, he LIVED that sermon.

The Little Foxes.

(Ellen A. Lutz, in Michigan 'Advocate.')

'Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.'

Take us the little foxes, that spoil our pleasant vines;
They ravage all the vineyard o'er, where'er a tendril twines;
Sly, selfish little foxes the bloom of love destroy,
And surely beasts of discontent gnaw down the fruits of joy.

The little foxes which we fear, of doubt and pride and greed,
Nip all the buds of timely grace which serve another's need;
And bitter weeds spring up apace, while faith and meekness pines,
In the wake of the little foxes which spoil our pleasant vines.

In vain we water, prune and train, with all our toil and care,
Our grapes of Eschol blast in bloom, our vines no fruitage bear;
Then take the little foxes; from the subtle foe set free,
Dear Lord, our pleasant vines shall thrive, and bear much fruit for Thee.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.—Genesis iv., 3-5.

That Five Shillings

(By John Stuart, in the 'Alliance News.')

Hammersmith Bridge, about five miles from the centre of London, is quite a handsome structure, picked out in green and gold, and is built on the suspension principle. No doubt it is substantial, but when crossed by a heavy vehicle it rocks like a cradle. On Sunday morning it is a rendezvous for loiterers who, having nothing to do, and not caring for church, throng the sidewalks, and leaning over the parapet watch the busy scene upon the river. This part of the Thames lends itself to boating; it is the very centre of the great university racecourse. Here is a tall athletic fellow, almost nude, who is rowing a long skiff, so narrow that, as one man remarks one false pull would send him into the water. Eight-oared galley after galley appears on the scene, and as the summer has not quite vanished the big steamboat for Hampton Court calls at the pier near the south end of the bridge, and adds a dozen to its already large complement of passengers. Apparently there is an unusually large supply of omnibuses and vehicles of various kinds, with one, two or four horses which add to the busy scene.

It is now eleven o'clock and except a few late comers churchgoers have settled down to worship, and the public-houses are all closed, save that one or two bear the legend 'Open to bona-fide travellers.' One solitary policeman guards the northern approach to the bridge and when I venture the question, 'Is there any temperance meeting held here on Sunday mornings?' he slowly replies, 'Can't say, I'm sure. I think there is. There used to be one this side of the bridge but they've been forbidden for some time. I fancy there's one at the other end, but can't say.'

It is astonishing how little a policeman knows of what is going on a few hundred yards away.

So I went to the other end, and found a temperance meeting just beginning. The only sign of officialism was a tiny platform, with a raised step, which was placed on the bank leading down to the river edge. The speaker lifted up his face to the men who leaned over the parapet of the bridge for some twenty yards. As the company grew listeners clustered round the desk. There was no singing, no forms of any sort, but after the London fashion, the speakers went at once to work. The responsible secretary of the mission acted as chairman, but spared himself, because he had ample assistance.

Following him came a stranger whose voice was less powerful, but whose style was more argumentative than that of most open-air speakers. Curiosity at first compelled attention, but this presently merged into an earnest desire to listen to the very temperate assertions made by him. He was venturing a reply to the question, 'Does it pay to abstain?' and was first of all discussing the matter from a financial standpoint. He had surprised his hearers by considering the case of an extremely moderate family, whose expenditure on intoxicants did not exceed 3s. per week, and he concluded that if such a family turned to lemonade and cocoa they would not be much in pocket.

He pointed out, however, that in England the average expenditure on drink per family was 7s. to 8s. per week, and he dilated on the considerable surplus there would be in the pocket of a working man who should give up drink, which cost 8s. per week, and turn to cocoa and milk, which would not cost more than 3s. The speaker thought it would be easy to spend an hour considering the investments a man could make who found himself every day with an unexpected 5s in his purse.

Among the men who listened was Dick Marling, a carpenter by trade, and in the very prime of manhood. He wore a tolerably good suit, had a clean-shaven face, and having no particular object in view stood there to pass away time. He was a Briton of average intelligence, with no special tastes or hobbies, and no active inclination for books or even newspapers. This was not the first time that he had listened to speakers on a Sunday morning, and they usually finished in time for him to pay a call at the nearest public-house, and drink a pint of ale on his way home to dinner. This his wife used to try to have ready at one o'clock, or soon after, in order that the children might attend Sunday-school with punctuality.

Of these, olive branches there were four, two boys aged twelve and ten, and two girls of five and seven. The mother had been a general servant before her marriage, and had acquired some skill in cooking. She had brought her experience into play as the mistress of Dick Marling's household, and did not waste a penny of the 30s. he gave her every Saturday on his coming home from work. It will be generally allowed that a London housewife who has rent to pay and food to provide for six individuals would not be able to indulge in any extravagant tastes. Her husband was rarely home to dinner, but she generally put an appetizing luncheon in his basket, and endeavored to provide a relish for the meal when the day's toil was over.

She rarely drank any beer herself, and readily encouraged her children to join a neighboring Band of Hope. Dick expected her to provide him with a glass of beer at supper time; to get it was not difficult, for the house in which they occupied three rooms was not a stone's throw from the nearest liquor shop.

Dick's wage averaged about £2 a week. Out of the 10s. he kept for himself he had his train or tram fares to pay, clothes to provide, and his drinks to pay for, and his union subscriptions to maintain. But he was a very moderate man, and the only time his wife had known him the worse for liquor was on the occasion of a 'beanfeast.' He was so annoyed with himself that he determined it should never happen again.

As he walked away from the meeting it occurred to him to reckon up how much he did spend during the week on beer, for he rarely touched spirits. Saturday, for example, he had a glass on his way home from work; in the afternoon two half pints if he went to a football match, and at least a pint on Saturday evening. On Sunday he remembered that he usually had three pints at one time or another. Monday was

a type of the five full working days. If it were hot, or if it were cold, he generally joined his mates about eleven o'clock in a glass; he drank another to wash down his dinner. It was a long while from dinner to tea time, and it was a real luxury to take a third. After tea he could hardly be expected to walk about the streets without using the liquor conveniences the State so plentifully furnishes.

As he tried to reckon up it mounted to something like 5s. This rather staggered him. It is true that the calculation coincided pretty accurately with the experience of his pocket, in which he seldom found much silver on the last day of the week. To make sure, he took the broad pencil out of his pocket and scribbled on a piece of rough paper the number of pints he had drunk the previous week, so far as he could remember. They came to eighteen, which at 3d. apiece meant 4s. 6d. To this he added 6d. for the 'treats' he stood now and then, and found that the speaker had not been far wrong in saying how easy it would be to find a surplus of 5s. if intoxicating liquors were left alone.

Those suggestions made by the speaker as to how much could be done with an unexpected 5s. set his mind in motion. He did not think very fast, but an idea flashed upon him that he should be rather proud of himself if his wages were 45s., instead of 40s. Then he recalled the adage, which says, 'A penny saved is a penny earned,' and rightly argued with himself that 5s. saved would be as good as 5s. earned.

A sudden impulse moved him to make a beginning by going without the pint he usually drank on his way home to dinner. He said nothing about it to his wife, and did not eat any smaller dinner in consequence, nor did it hinder him from indulging in his usual Sunday afternoon nap. After tea his wife and two of the children went to church; the other two he took for a stroll by the river side. Little Jessie repeated to him the recitation she had learned for the Band of Hope, and found her father more interested than usual. But it was with some difficulty that he restrained an inclination to drink on their way back, with dozens of public-houses desecrating the Sabbath evening. Yet where there's a will there's a way, and he conquered appetite, though he found a glass at supper which his wife provided most welcome.

The real struggle began on Monday, when the boy was collecting the pennies for the morning 'wet.'

'Don't buy any for me this morning.'

'Hallo, Dick, what's up? Signed the pledge?' said his nearest neighbor.

'No pledge for me,' he answered. 'I'm making an experiment.'

There was no time for argument or quarrel, as the foreman was at hand on the building, but on his way home at night Dick had to endure some taunts. He only laughed, and said he would tell them if the experiment succeeded. Despite taunts and the longing of custom and appetite, Dick got through the week, and when pay time came he had rather more than 5s. in his pocket. This was so unusual that he felt rich; he handled it with a little of the miser's glee as he counts his much-loved gold.

Dick had no intention of saving it. The pleasure on which he had counted, the motive which had upheld him through the week, was the spending of the money. And though 5s. will not buy everything, it will buy a good many things; and he could not determine which. Nor was he quite sure whether to buy it before he went home or to wait until the evening, when he would have plenty of time. Then he remembered that it was Jessie's birthday. At that moment he passed a shop full of dolls, one of which was marked 'Cheap! Five shillings!' He was quite unaccustomed to buying, certainly to buying dolls; but this large and handsomely-dressed creature took his fancy, and he went in, and bought it right away.

I think I must leave the reader to imagine Jessie's state of mind when her father put the parcel into her hands, and said, 'Here's a birthday present.' Even girls in rich families love new playthings, and to Jessie this was a treasure she had never dreamt of, since even to dream of it was past imagination. She sat down, stunned, for what seemed five minutes. Then she laid it carefully on the table, and put her arms round her father's neck. Kissing him again and again, she said, 'Thank you, daddy, oh! thank you, ever so much! What shall I do?'

'Well, Jessie, you must take care of it,' said the careful mother, who was wondering where the money came from, and what made her husband so extravagant. A good many wives would have begun to scold their husbands for not laying out the money in some other way, but Bessie Marling had discretion. She even smiled so pleasantly at her little girl's delight that strange sensations passed through the father's mind. He had not conceived that a surplus of 5s could have yielded so much pleasure, and he felt himself more than repaid for the self-denial of the past seven days. As usual he handed the 30s. to his wife.

Jessie's elder sister, whose name was Daisy, was glad of the new accession, but was inquisitive.

'Where did you get it, dad?'

'At the shop.'

'Yes, yes. I know that. But where did you get the money?'

'I saved it.'

Then the mother said, 'Don't be rude, Daisy, and ask too many questions.'

The gift seemed to put everybody in the best of humors, and after tea Dick told his wife that he would go to market with her. He did not always do this, but Mrs. Marling was glad to have her strong husband carry the basket. When they were started she thought she might satisfy her curiosity by saying, 'How did you manage to save so much, Dick?'

'I have had no beer all the week,' he answered.

'No beer!' she said, with great surprise.

Then he told her the story of the previous Sunday morning, and added, 'I think I could do without my supper beer, too; at least, I will try. And next week you shall have the 5s. I hope to save.'

You may be sure that Dick was no worse off in the next week. If anything, he had still nicer lunches and teas, and a warm cup of cocoa, instead of his supper beer; and when the next Saturday came, and Dick put 35s. into her hand, Bessie kissed her husband with gratitude, and tears were in her eyes—tears of joy.

For a number of weeks Dick exerted his mind in the spending of the 5s., buying now a picture, then a pair of boots for the boys. Again a new hat for himself. Then he learned to put the surplus of two weeks or more together, and bought some books. Then thought of making himself a bookcase. But in course of time he took his wife into confidence, and they moved into a better flat, which cost 2s. more for rent, but gave more comfort to the family.

What Dick thought most strange, however, was that he felt far better in himself, and was less tired after his day's work. He began to cultivate more self-respect, to take a greater interest in his children, and about six months later the conductor of the Sunday morning meetings was delighted to hear him ask how he could join the Good Templar Lodge.

That question was very soon answered.

A Point of Honor.

At a restaurant table lately four young people, two girls and two boys in their teens, discussed the affairs of the offices in which they were engaged, including the personal concerns, the characters, and customs of their employers, without any regard to the fact that they were imparting information that could never have come to their knowledge if they had not been placed in positions of trust.

It may be pleaded that such revelations are made thoughtlessly. Is it possible that thoughtlessness can be considered an excuse for dishonor?

Whether a man's property is destroyed by malicious forethought, or by the carelessness of his neighbor, his loss is the same. The revelation of a confidence from a mere childish desire to add something interesting to the conversation may be as harmful to an employer as if a trust had been deliberately betrayed. A foundation of honorable principle would prohibit such thoughtlessness.

A young girl has visited some friends in her own city. Several days after her return her hostess called. In conversation with the eldest daughters, who had the care of the motherless children, she referred, with evident embarrassment, to a circumstance that had occurred during Helen's visit. 'I supposed that she had told you,' exclaimed the surprised lady when she was assured that the matter had not even been hinted at. When the visitor had gone, Helen was informed of the conversation. 'What a poor opinion she must have of me,' exclaimed the girl, with heightened color. 'How could she think that I would repeat it, even to you, when I could not have known it if I had not been invited to her house, and I am sure she did not wish to have anything said about it.'

The children in that family were strictly trained to understand that honor required them to avoid appropriating information that was not intended for them. They knew that they should not read even the address on an envelope unless it was their business to know it.

Girls and boys in clerical positions have no more right to appropriate information unlawfully than they have to take for themselves the money that may pass through their hands. The knowledge of some of the business affairs of their employers is intrusted to their keeping; in many cases they also become acquainted with personal matters. Under no circumstances should they speak of them to outsiders.

Happily, hundreds of young people are filling positions of trust, and proving themselves trustworthy.—'The Home Maker.'

Spring.

Now is the seed-time; God alone,
Beyond our vision weak and dim,
Beholds the end of what is sown;
The harvest time is sad with Him.
Yet, unforgotten where it lies,
Though seeming on the desert cast,
The seed of generous sacrifice
Shall rise with bloom and fruit at last.
And he who blesses most is blest;
For God and man shall own his worth
Who toils to leave as his bequest
An added beauty to the earth.

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

Mag the Meddlesome.

'It must be horrid to sit behind bars all day long!' said a magpie to a canary, whose cage hung in the sunshine just outside a window that overlooked the garden.

'I don't find it so,' replied the canary. 'This cage is my home, and I am quite happy here.'

'Nonsense!' cried the magpie; 'you ought really to have a little ambition. You don't know the joys of freedom, and that's why you think yourself happy. Now, supposing I were to let you out of that wired prison of yours, what would you say to that?'

The canary fluttered his wings and gave a little chirp.

'Oh, Mr. Mag,' said he, 'you cannot doubt that I should love to spread my wings, and fly about as you do, but——'

'Now, no buts!' screamed the magpie. 'I'll let you out, if you really would like to be free and show yourself a bird of spirit. Let me see!' and the meddlesome fellow hopped on to a branch that overhung the cage, and reaching down to the little door, he dexterously lifted with his strong beak the wire latch.

There was an excited flutter, and then the canary darted from the home hitherto so happy, and flew to a neighboring tree, where, in the first bliss of his freedom, he poured forth a perfect flood of melody.

The day passed happily enough; but when the sun went down, the canary found himself shivering with cold, and feeling very hungry. He began to realize that an open-air life was hardly the life for him. He certainly could not live without food, and in the course of his day's wanderings he had seen no hemp, or rape, or canary-seed anywhere; only a little bit of rank, tough groundsel; and a single head of plantain almost empty.

All night the poor little bird sat wakeful and trembling, fearing each unaccustomed sound, and feeling as though in the darkness some ravenous thing might spring upon him at any moment.

With the first gleams of daylight he strained his eyes towards the place where his cage had hung. Yes! there it was still. There was his delicious lump of sugar between the bars, and the seed trough replenished, and a fresh lettuce leaf ready to yield him a juicy repast.

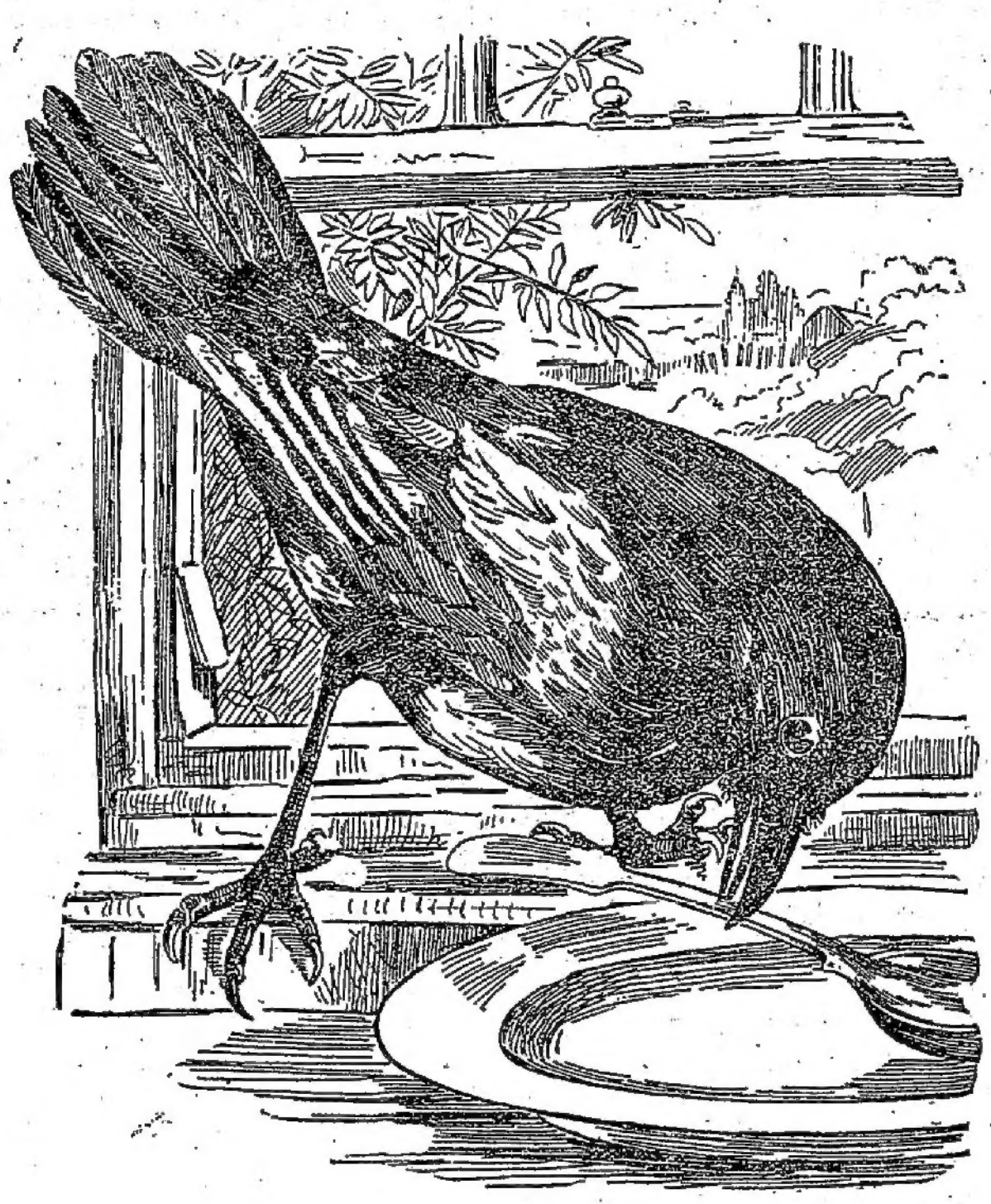
He stretched his stiffened limbs, spread his cold wings, wet with the dew, and flew—O joy!—safely back to his cage, and sitting on the topmost perch, he began to sing a little hymn of thanksgiving. His master heard it, and rising from his bed, he reached through the window, shut the grated door securely on his willing prisoner, and took the cage in.

Now it so happened that the gardener's little son came with his father to the garden very early that morning, and brought his breakfast of porridge and milk in a soup-plate, to eat there. When the child had finished his breakfast, he put down the plate, and ran after his father, who was mowing the lawn.

And now down flew Master Mag, and after picking up the few grains of oatmeal that were left, he glanced round once more with his bright, sly, wicked eyes to see that no one was looking, then caught hold of the bright metal spoon, and ran away with it into a bush, where he hid it away.

The passion for stealing grew upon the magpie as the day advanced; and seeing a window open and a glittering ring lying on the dressing table, he flew in, seized the ring, and carrying it off to the bush, hid it away beside the spoon. But this time he had not escaped notice. The young lady who owned the ring had seen him, and quickly following the culprit, she saw him disappear in the bush; so bringing her brother's butterfly net, she managed to catch the naughty bird, and secure the stolen property.

'So this is the use you make of your liberty, is it, sir?' she said, as she carried him into the house. 'People who don't make a right use of their privileges will find them taken away some day, and



HE CAUGHT HOLD OF THE BRIGHT METAL SPOON.

this is "some day" for you, Master Mag !'

So saying, she opened the door of a large cage where a parrot used to live, and popped Mr. Magpie in, where he found, to his shame and dismay, that he was close beside the canary.

'I see it all now,' thought the canary, pausing in his song. 'Innocence and contentment are sources of true happiness, while wrong-doing will bring a sure punishment sooner or later. I have learned my lesson, and now poor Mr. Mag is learning his.'—'Child's Companion.'

The Vision of Fidelity.

Sarah's father had died, and the farm and the dear old house had been sold, and the family came to the great, bustling city, where Sarah's mother could 'do tailoring,' as she used to when a girl, and Sarah could help to pay the rent for their two small rooms by working in the factory.

So there was nothing before little Sarah but factory life, She was a plain, pale, still little girl, and it was a dingy, noisy, ugly factory. They made toys and 'notions' there.

When she walked through the door for the first time she felt as if she were being shut in from God's beautiful world which she loved so well. She was an imaginative little body, and gave a nervous gasp as the factory door closed behind her with a bang and a click, and did not quite realize where she was until she was seated at a long table with many other girls, most of them older and larger than herself, and a sharp-voiced, sharp-featured woman was showing her how to put the bows on doll's slippers. That was her work. Each girl was provided with a box of slippers, a heap of bows, and a bottle of glue. And they were paid by the hundred.

Sarah was sure she could do as many as any of the girls, after a little practice, even if they were older and larger. She shut her lips tightly, and determined to do it, anyway; for had not Grandma Hall always said : 'Sary's wonderful spry with her hands ?'

So she set to work very energetically. Sometimes the glue brush would get nearly dry; but if there was enough to make the bow barely stick she did not stop to dip it then. The more bows she could fasten on with one dipping the better—it saved time. And she was determined to keep up with the others. That was the way they did, she discovered by a swift glance or two down the long table.

Presently her back ached a little, and she straightened up for a moment. In front of her, across the room, was a window, closed to keep out the dust and din of the street; But through its specky panes she saw something that made her heart leap for joy, while the glad tears came to her eyes. It was the blue-white crest of Mount Prospect, the mountain whose slowly wheeling shadow she had measured all the happy days of her short life. It was not, then, so very far from home! She almost smelled the cool, fragrant breath from the thickets that clothed its shaggy sides. She almost heard the songs of the birds that built their happy homes and sang their joyous hymns there.

Only a sharp voice recalled her from her day-dreaming, reminding her that girls who 'loafed' could not expect to keep their places, even if they did work 'by the piece' instead of 'on time.'

So her fingers flew faster than ever; but when she started to put on a bow with too little glue she stopped, blushing hotly. With the sight of the sturdy old mountain had come a vision of the beloved home life, the morning prayers, the Scripture reading; and one verse shone between her eyes and the dingy table—'For we are laborers together with God,'

'But that means grown people and more important things than sticking bows on dolls' slippers!' Sarah argued with the shining words. But she knew better.

'I am a laborer with God!' whispered the honest little soul—softly, to herself, you know, so that no one else but God heard. 'I am; and I will labor his way.'

And as her fingers flew, other verses came to be with the first—about doing 'all to the glory of God,' and 'in the name of the Lord Jesus,' and 'working faithfully, as unto the Lord.' So she was very happy as she worked; and the tired, disheartened mother was happy, too, that night, when Sarah told her all about it; and she determined to do her work that way, in spite of the temptations to slight it.

Sometimes the girls laughed at Sarah, for it was not long before they noticed how particular she was about the bows.

'What's the odds?' they scoffed. 'When we're paid by the piece, nobody'll know how it's done, so long as it looks well!'

'I would know,' said Sarah.

And I do not doubt but that many a little girl was saved a great deal of trouble over lost doll-slipper bows, just because they were glued on faithfully, 'as unto the Lord.' And though the other girls laughed, Sarah noticed that many of them grew more careful as the days went by.

The years flew swiftly, in spite of hard work and many cares. Grandma Hall went to join the dear ones whom she had 'loved long since, and lost awhile.' Not long after the dear mother went, too, and Sarah was left alone.

But Sarah worked on in the factory, her heart growing more tender with each sorrow. It is quite true she was weary sometimes, and longed for a breath of fresh air, such as she had enjoyed in her childhood home at the foot of old Prospect Mountain, but she had much love given to her in every room where she worked, as finer parts were given her.

And when some girl, tired and disheartened, longed for a friendly hand, or the love and tenderness of the dear mother, perhaps hundreds of miles away in a quiet country home, she turned naturally to the little plain woman with the sweet, firm mouth and the steady eyes. And those who knew her best believe that nothing in the world outside could add to the fullness and happiness of the life lived amid the turmoil of a great factory by 'one little laborer with God.'—'Christian Standard.'

Evening Prayer for a Child.

(By Henry Johnstone.)

Father, unto Thee I pray,
Thou hast guarded me all day;
Safe I am while in Thy sight,
Safely let me sleep to-night.

Bless my friends, the whole world bless;
Help me to learn helpfulness;
Keep me ever in Thy sight;
So to all I say, Good night.

LESSON V.—MAY 5.

Jesus and Peter,

John xxi., 15-22. Memory verses, 15-17.

Golden Text.

'Lovest thou me?'—John xxi., 17.

Lesson Text.

(15) So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. (16) He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (17) He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. (19) This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. (20) Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and saith, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? (21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? (22) Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Suggestions.

The message of the angels was that Christ had risen and would go before his disciples into Galilee, where they should see him as he had promised them before.

Peter and six others of the apostles had gone fishing on the sea of Galilee, but they had caught nothing all night. In the morning Jesus stood on the shore and directed them where to cast their nets and their net was immediately overflowing. John's loving heart recognized Jesus, and when Peter heard that it was the Lord, he left the boat and swam to shore to be first at the side of Jesus. After they had eaten the bread and fish which Jesus gave them, he took Peter aside and questioned him: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

Three times Peter had denied his Lord, now Jesus allows him three times to express his love, and each time assures him of forgiveness by bidding him tend for him the lambs and sheep of his fold. The word used by Peter for love is not the same as that used by our Lord in the first two questions. Perhaps a new and beautiful humility kept Peter from using that word implying a greater and more unselfish love, or perhaps he felt that that word did not imply all the clinging love that he felt. Commentators differ as to the exact meaning of these Greek words, agapao and phileo.

The one great lesson we may draw from this is the need of personal contact with Christ. Last week we learned how such an interview instantly dispelled the dark clouds of doubt that hung around Thomas. Now we see how speedily such an interview brings about the restoration of a backslider. It is personal contact with Jesus that is needed. If men would honestly carry their doubts to Jesus, instead of locking them up to embitter their own heart, or carrying them round to display to others and to disturb the faith of the weak, Jesus would answer their questionings and satisfy their souls. If the backslider would listen to the voice of Jesus instead of trying to stifle all longings to hear that voice, if he would confess to Jesus his great emptiness of heart, instead of trying to fill up the void with worldly pleasures and excitements, if he would personally ask Jesus for forgiveness and peace instead of trying to assure himself and his friends that he does not need them, everything would be made right by a personal interview. Without reproaches the Saviour would ask, Lovest thou me? And so the soul would cry in glad submission, Thou knowest that I love thee: the past would be blotted out of God's remembrance, and the occasion would remain in the man's mind only as an incentive to greater love.

The great mistake is in going to man instead of to God. A little girl once said to her Sabbath-school teacher, 'I would like to be a Christian, but I know I would be afraid to die for Christ, I would have to deny him if any one came with a sword to make me.' The teacher had never experienced any such qualms herself so she merely said with great impressiveness:—'Oh, no, you would not deny Christ, would you! The child was silenced but not convinced, and for many long years she was haunted by the fear that she would deny her Saviour if any severe occasion arose. Now, the teacher might have permanently helped that child by kneeling and praying with her that Jesus would take that fear entirely away and fill her with his own courage and peace. Dear teachers and mothers, do not only talk about Jesus with your children, but talk to him with them and teach them how to talk to him themselves.

Questions.

What question did our Lord ask Peter? How often did he ask it? and why? What did Peter answer? How did Jesus show Peter that he forgave him? What did he say would happen to Peter when he was old? Does the Lord Jesus still love those who have denied him?

Lesson Hymn.

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour—hear His word:
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
'Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

'I delivered thee when bound,
And, when bleeding, healed thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turned thy darkness into light.

'Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

'Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of My joys shalt be;
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?'

Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint,
Yet I love Thee, and adore;
Oh, for grace to love Thee more!
—William Cowper, 1779.

C. E. Topic.

Sun., May 5.—Topic—Decision of character.—Rev. iii., 14-16; Prov. iv., 23-27.

Junior C. E. Topic.

TROUBLES THAT WORRY.

Mon., Apr. 29.—Real troubles.—Gen. xxxvii., 24.

Tues., Apr. 30.—Troubling ourselves.—Mark xvi., 3, 4.

Wed., May 1.—Trouble from wrong-doing.—Luke xxii., 61.

Thu., May 2.—Avoiding trouble.—Prov. iv., 14, 15.

Fri., May 3.—Pray in your trouble.—Ps. xxxiv., 4-6.

Sat., May 4.—Jesus and the troubled.—Matt. xi., 28-30.

Sun., May 5.—Topic—Things that are troubling you. Matt xxii., 34-40. (Question box meeting.)

Free Church Catechism.

48. Q.—Why do Christians partake in common of the Lord's Supper?

A.—To show their oneness in Christ, to confess openly their faith in him, and to give one another a pledge of brotherly love.

49. Q.—What is a Christian's chief comfort in this life?

A.—That in Christ he belongs to God, who makes all things work together for good to them that love him.

John Valour, Mayor.

(By Emily Jones Davies.)

John Valour had always been successful, even when a boy. He won more marbles, scored more goals, made more runs than any any other boy of his age. And now that he was a man, it remained the same. John Valour, apprentice, workman, master, ran through those stages easily and lightly, and after he had become councillor and alderman he was still without a grey hair, or a lined brow. His merry blue eye and hearty voice, with that generous hand-grip, made you feel quite warm and brotherly. His great mills and works spread themselves out to right and left, and money rolled in like the incoming tide, not only kissing the feet of this king of commerce, but lavishly lapping those of his admirers, too; so that to be connected in any way with John Valour was to expect success.

And was he spoilt by this? Oh, no. In the street, or shop, or market, he had always a nod and smile for an old friend. Of course, he had not much time now for church work, and the Band of Hope missed its genial president, the prayer meeting one of its loudest supporters, and he could not well manage to take his appointments as local preacher; but, then, he always paid for a good supply, and when a man has much to do Providence will surely be merciful!

Going to his comfortable, even elegant, home one night, he said, in that big voice of his, as soon as he was well into the hall:

'Well, Peggy, you are in for it now; they have made me Mayor.'

'Oh, John,' cried a timid-looking woman, 'I am glad. You are so clever, and will like it. But,' rather fearfully, 'I don't know how I shall manage it.'

'Like a duchess,' he said, laughing loudly. 'Only be sure you order some fine dresses, for I want you to look as well as the best.'

Mrs. Valour colored with pleasure, like a true woman enjoying the prospect of lovely costumes. He had letters to write and dictate, business to do which occupied him all the evening, so that when he returned to his cosy sitting room he was 'dead beat,' as he said.

Mrs. Valour had some good soup before him in a trice, and with gentle, loving words and more loving ministries, prepared herself for a real chat about the new distinction when her husband had finished his supper. But he having tasted his soup, said testily:

'Haven't you got some nice wine in the house? It would take a bucketful of this to bring me up to par again.'

'Yes, dear, but I thought this would be better; and—and—safer,' she finished bravely.

'Now, see here, Maria, once for all, I won't be dictated to on this point. If I were a weak noodle of a man, who couldn't control himself, you might talk; but my success in life is a plain proof that I am master of myself. I am going to take this as a medicine strictly, and you must not be surprised if I take it often. Business life is a great strain in these days, and when added to by town duties it is insupportable without stimulants.

Having uttered these significant and weighty words, he sat back in his chair, looking every inch a 'masterful Englishman.' But Mrs. Valour could be persistent, too, and temperance was her strong point; she used to help in the Band of Hope.

'But, my dear, what about your splendid temperance speeches?'

'Oh, that's all right,' he said, airily. 'They were true at the time,' saying which John Valour, Mayor of Cranston, crossed the room and poured out for himself a full glass of old port, 'laid in' in expectation of congratulatory calls likely to be made.

'There, I feel better already, and can manage the soup now.'

An anxious look crept into his wife's eyes, and she felt little interest in their chat,

though she tried hard to assume it. By-and-bye her husband said—

'Well, I needn't bother you with details of the functions to come, but I shall give three immediately. One to our friends and townsfolk on the 20th, to be followed by a ball for the bairns on the 21st, and wind up with a real good time for the young folk on the 22nd. Be sure to dress nicely, and remember blue is my favorite color.'

Never was a Mayor so popular, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, all were delighted with him.

'No crotchet or faddist,' said the worthy vicar. 'Such a liberal fellow,' said the Methodist minister. A few advised their young folk not to go to the ball, but they were laughed at as 'old-fashioned and quite illiberal.' Active preparations were made—the town was quite excited; everybody was on the qui vive on the third day of the feast.

Two smart young fellows went amongst the rest, well-educated, well-placed in life, gay, handsome, full of joy. They had been members of the Band of Hope when Mr. Valour was its president, so they felt very much at home with their host, and after the formal reception was over he chatted freely with them on many things. Very beautiful the town hall looked, with its hundreds of fairy lamps, the lovely blossoming plants, and the delicate brightness of the ladies' dresses, to say nothing of sweet young faces full of mirth and pleasure. But it was very warm, and the buffet was eagerly sought for cool lemonade and ices. Our two young friends made their way there, and met their host just draining off a glass of port wine. They looked at each other quickly, and in surprise. Mr. Valour saw the look pass, and laughed uneasily as he said: 'Don't follow my example; remember I am getting an old fellow, and work very hard.'

They laughed too, as one said, with a shrug—

'Of course, just so,' and turned away.

'There, I always told you it was all moonshine to take the pledge; why, bless you, man, I believe they all drink privately.'

'No, they don't; my father and mother do not,' protested the other stoutly.

But he yielded. That night one father wrung his hands in bitter anguish, as he cried, 'Oh, Henry, my son, son; would God I had died for thee,' while his mother prayed, with sobs and tears, for the boy who had been cruelly tripped by a stumbling block placed in his way. That night these men took their first glass of wine. To-night, if you seek them, you must not inquire for them at the solicitor's office, or the market. You must go down to a certain public-house, in a low slum, and there you may see them, swollen of face and limb, careless of dress and speech, singing low songs that would bring the blush to your cheek. Fallen, degraded, drunken. 'Habitual drunkards.' God help those fathers and mothers. God save and pity those young men.

Mr. Valour? Oh, he is still prosperous, and he never visits that part of the town except on election days. He says it is a man's own fault if he makes a beast of himself.—'Alliance News.'

The Two Streets.

Two streets there are in many towns—
A foul one and a fair;
In one the sweetest peace abounds,
In one a dark despair.
In one the light of love is shed,
In one grief's bitter tear:
The name of one of these is 'Bread,'
The name of one is 'Beer.'

In Bread street there are busy men,
And happy homes and wives;
In Beer street the degraded den,
And sad and broken lives.
In Bread street Plenty sings her song,
And Labor chants his rhyme;
In Beer street want is joined with wrong
And idleness with crime.

O men and mothers! strive to do
The most you can to make
The children shun the ones who brew
But love the ones who bake.
There is a street their feet should tread,
And one their feet should fear—
The name of one of these is 'Bread,'
The name of one is 'Beer.'

—Nixon Waterman, in 'The Voice.'

Correspondence

Mira Gut, C.B.

Dear Editor,—I live on the banks of the Mira River, about a mile from the Mira Bay, and the same distance from the railway station. I have two sisters and one brother. My eldest sister takes the 'Messenger,' and I like reading it very much.

FLORENCE N. (Aged 11.)

Knowlesville, N.Y.

Dear Editor,—I am nine years old, I have a little sister four years old, and two brothers. Mamma died last June.

ROYCE H.

East Wallace, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Messenger' for four years. My father died when I was two years old. I have one brother and two half-sisters, named Sadie and Amy. Amy's Initials are A. B. C. I live with my uncle and go to school. The school house is on a hill surrounded by trees, except the front, facing the road. It is nice and cool under the trees in the hot weather. The girls go picking gum at noontime. In winter we slide on the lake just across the road from the school house. And coast down the long hills. I live near the school, and in summer I dig clams, pick pretty shells and stones. But I am glad when a holiday comes, so I can go to see mamma. She lives about a mile and a half from here, and I can go to see her quite often. My birthday is on Jan. 25.

JENNIE S., (Aged 13 years.)

Lower Salmon Creek.

Dear Editor,—I have renewed my 'Messenger' subscription for another year, and feel that I would be very lonesome without it for we have taken it so long. I am saving my papers to send to India. The doctor will not let me go to school, as I am not very strong, but I hope to go in another year. I have three sisters and two brothers. My papa works in the lumber woods in the winter, he comes home to see us every two or three weeks. My brother and sister and I are studying the scripture passages for the diplomas given by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

EDNA F. B., (Aged 10.)

Halifax, N.S.

Dear Editor,—Ever since I began to take the 'Northern Mesenger,' I have been looking for a letter from Halifax, but I have not seen one, so I am writing one to-day.

I think you must be a very kind man to bother printing our letters. I am nearly eleven years old. My birthday is on March 17. We take the 'Northern Messenger' and the 'Weekly Witness,' and father thinks he will take the 'World Wide,' next year, so you see how much we think of your papers.

HELEN McG. D.

Ingersoll, Ont.

Dear Editor,—My father is a farmer, and lives on a large farm. I have two sisters and no brother. I have a pretty little colt. I call her Bert and I think a great deal of her. I have two kittens, they are great pets, and their names are Minto and Tabby. I go to school every day. My teachers name is Miss Petrie, and we like her very much. We have been taking the 'Messenger' for three years, and would not like to be without it.

ALBERTA P., (Aged 10.)

Kars, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm called Maple Avenue. It is situated on the banks of the Rideau River. I go to Wellington school. The studies I like best are grammar, dictation, and literature. My sister takes the 'Messenger' and I enjoy reading it very much.

CORA M. S.

Boissevain, Man.

Dear Editor,—I like the 'Messenger' very much, my grandpa sent it to me as a Christmas box this year. I have five brothers and three sisters. We have had a very nice winter so far.

WILLIE S. P.

Mount Pleasant, B.C.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl six years old. I go to Sunday-school every Sunday, and try to be a good girl. I can read in the Bible a little. I have a dear little baby brother, his name is Willie.

LUCY E.

St. Claude.

Dear Editor,—My papa chopped wood to pay for the 'Messenger' when he was a little boy, and I think I would too if I did not get it. My birthday is on Christmas, and I was baptised with Jordan water, so I ought to be a good boy.

READ B.

Queenstown, N.B.

Dear Editor,—My mother has been taking the 'Northern Messenger' for twenty-five years and it would be like losing one of the family to do without it. I live on a farm along the beautiful St. John River. My father has a steam grist mill. I have one brother and one sister, and I attend school, which is very handy to our place. I go to Sunday-school in the summer, and we attend Baptist and Church of England services. I enjoy skating very much, but there has been very little this winter. I enjoy reading your paper very much, and was very much interested in a story I read in it entitled 'One Perilous Glass.' I have taken the temperance pledge, and joined the W. C. T. U.

MAUD R.

Toronto.

Dear Editor,—We have been getting the 'Messenger' at our Sunday-school for about two years. We like it very much. Father and Mother always read it, and we hear it spoken of very highly by those who read it, and I can assure you they are not a few, The pastor of our church, we all love so dearly, no doubt you know him, as he was before coming to us pastor of a church in Point St. Charles.

AGNES G., (Aged 10.)

Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Editor,—I am seven years old, I have one brother and two sisters. I go to Sunday-school, and I have got a prize for Regularity and Punctuality. I had three little playmates, but they have moved away to Mission City, I miss them very much.

ELSIE M. D.

Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Editor,—I lost my dog. My birthday is on Feb. 27. I have two cats. My aunty lives in the country. I stay with her in summer. I have a doll and a cat. I go to the Baptist Church with my ma and pa. My mother teaches a Sunday-school class.

ALICE GRACE S., (Aged 7.)

Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm beside the Red River. I have two miles to go to school. We have lots of fun riding in the boats. I have four brothers and four sisters. I take my little sister Edith with us to Sunday-school. Alice and I are the oldest girls in the family. I have a dog named Bunt and two cats named Tom and Dick. My birthday is on Christmas day. My father has two horses and four cows. My pets are a calf and a dolly. We go to the Baptist church. My grandpa and grandma are living with us. My papa teaches the Bible class. I wonder if any little reader of this paper has the same name as mine.

MARY MABEL S., (Aged 8.)

Cresswell, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I have two sisters but no brothers. I have three pets, a chicken named Polly, a cat named Tim, and a dog named Beecher. We get the 'Messenger' at our Sunday-school, and I like to read the little folks' page and the Correspondence. We have three horses, Nellie, Billie and May.

Evelyn M. T., (Aged 9.)

Dundas, Kent Co.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger' every week. I think it is very nice. I live on a farm in Dundas, New Brunswick. I have a pet lamb named Darkey. I am eight years old and my brother is six. We go to school every day.

WILLIE D. B.

Erle, Que.

Dear Editor,—I am a little boy nine years old. I live on a farm. I take the 'Messenger,' and like it very much. I have two cats, the name of one is Jack, the other is Dannie. I live a mile from the school. I do not go to school in the winter.

ARCHIE T.

Hampton, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I like reading the Correspondence. I have two little sisters, their names are Gracie and Ethel. My birthday was Feb. 6.

CARRIE T., (Aged 11.)

HOUSEHOLD.

'She Takes not Time to Pray.'

(New York 'Observer.')

It seemed best, for various reasons, that the semi-annual upheaval should be attended to in our home while our housewives are still looking forward to it—with a feeling of dread, I feel sure, for I have yet to see the woman who enjoys the turmoil, though the result is viewed with a sigh of relief and satisfaction, as I can testify. I have no wish, however, to advance my way, or offer any suggestions save to drop a hint, in his name, which may make the ordeal less trying to some, if acted upon.

Glancing out of the window one morning, during the house-cleaning siege, I noticed that our faithful helper had halted to talk with one of whom I had heard only words of praise; and that she shook her head in a most determined manner, and wholly unlike her. She usualy enters the house with a beaming face, but that morning she looked troubled, and, as if to relieve her mind, said:

'I likes not to say no, when that lady wants me, but I never clean houses for her, never any more.'

Thinking I had misunderstood her broken way of putting it, I said:

'Could she not wait until you had time to give her?'

'I never has time to give that woman,' was the quick rejoinder, 'I am not ready to die. I must vork, vork some more years for my leetle family.'

I did not wish to encourage the poor woman to unburden any grievance, but thinking: 'Can it be possible that a woman who professes to be a follower of Christ has defrauded this faithful creature of her just dues?' I made no reply.

'I, big and stout looking, but I gets all trembly here,' she continued, as she placed her hand over her heart, 'an' I die, sure, if I clean house of that lady some more times. She all right on wash days, but long mit the house cleanin' she so cross! Oh, my! An' she say, "Hurry, hurry," all times. So I mooch hurries, till I tinks my heart quits vork. Oh, no, I never vorks for her in the house cleanin' time. I not likes to die yet.'

A little later reference was made to one for whom she always works at such times, and with face aglow, she said:

'I likes mooch to vork for her. She all times such a pleasant lady. House cleanin' days same, other days, she smiles an' speaks kind to everybody.'

There was silence for a few moments, while one pair of hands dusted the wall and the other bric-a-brac, and then, with a sigh, I exclaimed:

'What makes the difference? Both women profess to be Christians.'

As I uttered those words, the faithful worker across the room looked about with a knowing look and said:

'I tinks I know. I—'

Then she came to a sudden pause, as if fearing she would be stepping beyond the bounds of propriety if she presumed to give her employer information. So many lessons, however, come to me from humble people, that I was eager to know if she had solved the mystery, and so urged her to finish what she started to say.

'I not like to say it,' said she, hesitatingly, 'but I tinks in the house cleanin' times, the cross lady so mooch busy, she takes not time to pray. See?'

Yes, I did 'see,' and alas, in the cross lady, I viewed a true counterpart of many another; and was again reminded of how I once heard one such say:

'I never expect to have religion enough to enable me to control my temper during house cleaning.'

I recalled, too, that when asked if she prayed for special grace for the trying time, she made answer contritely:—

'I scarcely take time to pray.'

Then, thinking of the one who must fight dust and dirt all the year round in order to support her little ones, and how she smiled as she worked, I ventured this personal remark:

'I do not think you forget to pray, else you could not always keep sweet, with so much to try your patience.'

The faithful creature hesitated an instant, and then, with an upturned look, she said softly:

'No, lady, I never forget to ask our Fader to make me strong for all tings. An he so good. He helps me all times.'

The way she said it went straight to my heart, and I resolved anew that whatever the day's duties, that I, too, so long as life should last, would take time to ask our Father 'to make me strong for all things.'

It seems a pity that the beautiful spring time should be marred by so much that is nerve trying, but fret and worry only aggravate matters. So, dear housewife, let it be not said of us:

'She takes not time to pray.'

—Helena H. Thomas.

An Effective Relish.

Tomato jelly is an appetizing and effective relish that will be found particularly acceptable at Sunday night tea or at any day luncheon. It is made from a can of strained tomatoes. Season the juice well, remembering that tomatoes stand generous salting, and add hot to a half box dissolved gelatine. Serve it, when set, with celery mayonnaise, cold slaw, lettuce salad or anything that sliced tomatoes would be offered with. A particularly suitable accompaniment to this delicacy is celery cheese. Take a head of celery, wash thoroughly and boil until tender; drain well and cut up into small pieces. Have ready a pint of creamy and rich drawn butter, add pepper, salt and an ounce of grated cheese to it, put the celery into the sauce for a few minutes, then fill buttered scallop shells with the mixture, scatter grated cheese over the top and bake for ten minutes in a quick oven, when the cheese should be evenly browned.

Selected Recipes.

Beef Fritters.—Boil pieces of beefsteak and cold roast-beef, until tender. Cut them into pieces about three inches long and one inch wide; season with lemon juice, mustard, pepper, salt, and ground celery seed. Have ready a batter made by beating two eggs light with two tablespoonfuls of sweet milk, one-half cup of flour, and one teaspoonful of baking powder. Dip each piece of beef in this batter and fry in a hot, buttered pan or hot lard as you do fritters.

Crisps.—Make a dough of one cupful of thin cream and a little more than three cupfuls of graham flour. Knead until smooth, then divide the dough into several pieces and place in a dish on ice for an hour, or until ice-cold. Roll each piece separately, and quickly, as thin as brown paper. Cut with a knife into squares, prick with a fork and bake on perforated tins until lightly browned on both sides. These crisps are easily digested and a delicate accompaniment to salads and soups, or to eat with stewed or preserved fruit.

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